MRS. JAMESON ON SHAKESPEARE

AND THE

COLLIER EMENDATIONS

BY

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MRS. JAMESON ON SHAKESPEARE AND THE COLLIER EMENDATIONS.

HAPPENING to have in my possession a volume once the property of the late Mrs. Jameson, showing on its margin a number of autograph pencillings expressive of opinion and sentiments, I have thought that a transcript of some of them might not be devoid of interest to Toronto readers; indelibly associated as the name of that writer is with the early annals of the city. The volume referred to is a copy of the well-known "Notes and Emendations to the Text of Shakespeare's Plays," published in 1853 by J. Payne Collier. Notes and Emendations, derived, it will be remembered, from an old folio Shakespeare of 1632, casually picked up by Collier at Mr. Rodd's, a well-known dealer in antiquarian books in London, filled with manuscript corrections of some former unknown possessor. Collier's volume created a great deal of controversy, as its emendations, if received, would oblige all preceding readers and students of Shakespeare to alter their ideas in regard to numerous passages in their favourite author, and render imperfect all former editions of Shakespeare. Mrs. Jameson's book has on a fly leaf at the beginning her autograph, "Anna Jameson," and at the close of some introductory matter she has given a key to certain symbols which she has made use of throughout the work to indicate her approval or otherwise of the emendations. A small cross indicates "accepted"; a small O, "rejected"; a ?, "questionable." In addition to these marks, which are to be seen on almost every page, we have besides frequent exclamations—such as "No, no!"

"Yes, more than no," "No, more than yes." Once or twice "stupid," and occasionally "plausible." It would, of course, occupy too much space to give at full length all the corrections thus marked, although every one of them deserves consideration as proceeding from the hand of so competent a judge of Shakespeare as Mrs. Jameson has shown herself to be in her well-known work entitled "Characteristics of Women"—meaning, in particular, the women of Shakespeare.

This volume seems to have belonged to the observant and intelligent manager of some theatre in London at some period soon after the year 1632. He appears to have made it the receptacle of a variety of manuscript memoranda relating to the stage. He has corrected therein with his own pen a number of typographical and other errors, such as mishearings, etc., and wrong punctuations, detected by him in the text. He has inserted here and there lines which were known by him, doubtless on some competent authority, to have been omitted, including some rhyming endings. He has added many special stage directions, and has cancelled some sentences which, as we may suppose, it was unusual for the actors of the day to deliver. It would extend this paper to too great a length were I to attempt to give anything like a free account of the changes suggested by the manuscript corrector. I shall, therefore, simply present a few specimens, giving first the word with which Shakespeare readers have been compelled to content themselves from the year 1632 downwards, making out of it whatever sense they best could; and then the word or words which ought to be substituted, and finally I add the approval, partial or otherwise, of Mrs. Jameson, and, in some instances, her rejection of the change. I begin with an example from "The Merry Wives of Windsor," in Act 2, Sc. 1. The corrector bids us change "precision" into "physician"; Mrs. Jameson affixes her mark of approval to the alteration.

Again in "Hamlet," Act 3, Sc. 4, "sconce" for "silence." To this also Mrs. Jameson affixes her mark of approval. "In Hamlet," Act 4, Sc. 4, "politic" becomes "palated," but this Mrs. Jameson rejects. In the same play, Act 4, Sc. 4, she consents to "stoop" for

"step," with a query added, however. In "Hamlet," Act 1, Sc. 5, for "despoiled" we are to read "despatched." To this no demurrer is entered, which is also the case with "back" for "beck" (Act 3, Sc. 1), "scene" for "same," Act 5, Sc. 2.

In "Cymbeline," Act 3, Sc. 6, read "tir'd" for "attired," and this is approved; in the same play Act 1, Sc. 1, "perverse errant" we are told ought to be "imperseverant." This is queried but marked possible by Mrs. Jameson. In "As You Like It," Act 3, Sc. 4, for "capable" read "palpable." This is approved; again in Act 3, Sc. 4, "rather" for "ranker" is marked with approval.

In "King John," Act 5, Sc. 4, for "rude eye" read "roadway." This is queried.

In the "Taming of the Shrew," Act 2, Sc. 1, read "moon" for "morn"; while affixing the query Mrs. Jameson adds: "More yes than no." In the same play, Act 1, Sc. 1, the very noticeable change of "checks" to "Ethicks" receives approval. (The allusion is to a work formerly held in great repute, namely, "Aristotle's Ethics.") It should be noted in the prelude to this play, "sheer ale" should read "Warwickshire ale." In Act 3, Sc. 2, of this play the reading of the "Amours or Forty Fancies" is given instead of the "Humour of Forty Fancies." There is believed to be here a previously undetected reference to a certain production of Drayton's, and light is thrown on a misunderstanding which is known to have arisen between that writer and Shakespeare. Mrs. Jameson adds cautiously to this conjecture the marginal note that this is a "speculation hardly borne out by proof of any kind; possible, however."

In "Macbeth," Act 1, Sc. 5, for "blanket" read "blankness." This Mrs. Jameson marks a plausible "more yes than no." In the same play, Act 3, Sc. 4, she queries "exhibit" for "inhabit." Again in "Macbeth," Act 1, Sc. 7, curiously she declines to accept "boast" for "beast," the true reading, according to old Shakespeare readers; and auditors were naturally unwilling to give up Lady Macbeth's emphatic "beast," which they had been wont so thoroughly to approve of. In a similar manner, in the same play, Act 5, Sc. 3, where we are instructed to

substitute the word "grief" for "stuff," Mrs. Jameson is disinclined to accept the change, with the candid avowal: "I don't much like to give up *stuff*."

In the "Merchant of Venice," Act 2, Sc. 3, "inserted" for "inferred" is approved of in a qualified way, "more yes than no." In Act 3, Sc. 2, "pause" for "peize" is queried, and in Act 5, Sc. 1, "posy" is accepted for "poesy." In Act 4, Sc. 1, of this play occurs the very important change of "woollen" to "bollen." A woollen bagpipe had greatly exercised all commentators. It appears that it should have been a bollen bagpipe, that is, a bagpipe fully inflated, as old English hearers would have understood the expression. Mrs. Jameson, however, can only accept this with a query.

In "Henry IV.," Act 4, Sc. 4, for "Let's sway on" read "Let's away on," which Mrs. Jameson improves into "Let us away." In the same play, Act. 1, Sc. 2, "Masking," though supported by the context, is refused.

In "Othello," Act 4, Sc. 2, to "shift" for "shut," she appends "more yes than no"; and in the same play, Act 3, Sc. 3, "mock" for "make" is not objected to.

In "The Tempest," Act 1, Sc. 2, "loaded" for "lorded" is not approved of; and a criticism is added upon the old corrector's change of "truth" into "untruth" thus, "the memory become a sinner to truth, not to untruth." In Act 4, Sc. 1, she queries "thrid" for "third." But in Act 1, Sc. 2, she accepts "float" (the verb) for "flote" (meaning a fleet). In Act 3, Sc. 1, the simple reading of "blest" for "lest" is not accepted; nevertheless, this amendment of the old corrector, when fully considered, will be seen, I think, to throw light on a difficult passage. One is rather surprised to find she does not approve of the reading "blest" for "lest" in the passage, which has so long been a puzzle to commentators, where Ferdinand, while engaged in his task of piling cord-wood at the bidding of Prospero, says to himself, while thinking of Miranda: "These sweet thoughts do even refresh my labours"—the folio of 1623 here said, "lest when I do it," which the editor of folio 1632, misunderstanding, changed into least, making some sense out of the passage; but the true reading, as the Collier annotator informs us, was blest, for which lest

was a typographical error. The restoration of the "b" at once makes the sense very plain.*

In "King Henry V.," Act 2, Sc. 3, the old corrector of the folio has made a change in Mrs. Quickly's account of the Last Moments of Falstaff, which although it seems to clear up every difficulty has staggered many old Shakespeare students. He has drawn his pen through "babbled of green fields," and substituted "on a table of green frieze" in the place of these words, detecting and correcting the typographical errors of "on" for "and," and "frieze" for "fields." It appears that Mrs. Quickly compared the nose of the dying Falstaff to the point of a pen seen in strong profile on a table covered with green frieze or cloth (an old-fashioned substantial quill pen seen lying aslant in bold relief on a writing table must be thought of). It seems little in harmony with the character of Falstaff to make him in his dying moments "babble of green fields," but the expression when once committed to print took the fancy of Shakespeare readers and hearers, and when required to give it up now as a blunder many of them of course resist manfully; among these Mrs. Jameson appears to have been one, and she does not scruple, without

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* Dr. Robert Chambers, of Edinburgh, in a manuscript note of his in my possession, thus plausibly explains the passage as previously received: "But these sweet thoughts do even refresh my labours; most busy least when I do," *i.e.*, he pulls up in his soliloquy with the reflection that he is forgetting his work. "But these thoughts," he continues, "which occupy my mind, quite refresh my labours and keep me busiest when with my hands I am doing least."

This note is taken from Dr. Robert Chambers' copy of the Collier Emendations, likewise in my possession. He has therein made several other manuscript notes of his own. It would appear that in the old volume corrected by the annotator, some pages were missing, and some were damaged. On this circumstance, Dr. Chambers makes the observation: "It is greatly to be regretted that the corrected folio has had a leaf here and there abstracted from it. Valuable improvements in the common text have thus, no doubt, been lost."

Dr. Robert Chambers has also this remark: "There can be no doubt that this corrector had access to some means of information—stage copies of the plays, MS., or otherwise—which we do not now possess." "A writer in the *Dublin University Magazine*, in 1868," he continues, "very sensibly says: 'It seems to me strange how any intelligent, thoughtful, unbiased reader can doubt the self-evident rightness of all the more important emendations contained in the Collier folio. Whoever put them there, they speak for themselves; even in the case of the table of green frieze.'"

entering into the particulars of the question, not only to mark it with the symbol of her disapprobation, but also in an off-hand manner to stigmatize it in the margin of her copy thus, "this is all stupid and quite inadmissible" (but see Chambers' remarks at the close of footnote just given).

In "Antony and Cleopatra," Act 1, Sc. 1, "souring" for "lowering" is approved of, but in Act 4, Sc. 8, "gests" (deeds) for "guests" is rejected.

In "Twelfth Night," Act 5, Sc. 1, "foot" is considered an improvement on "soul."

In certain instances it would appear Mrs. Jameson herself had anticipated the old corrector. In "All's Well That Ends Well," Act 3, Sc. 2, she appends the note, "I had made this correction in my Shakespeare"; and in "The Taming of the Shrew," Act 4, Sc. 4, she says in almost the same terms, "I had made this correction years ago in my own Shakespeare."

After three of the plays annotated in this work Mrs. Jameson has pencilled down some general observations of her own which will be read with interest. After "Measure for Measure," she says: "This play has always appeared to me the most difficult and corrupted in point of language of any of Shakespeare's plays." A similar remark is made upon "Love's Labour's Lost": "This is another of the most difficult of Shakespeare's plays in the language and allusions." And to "Troilus and Cressida," she subjoins: "This also is one of the most difficult of the plays and one of the most wonderful in point of language."*

In "Romeo and Juliet," Act 3, Sc. 2, run-away's is corrected into "enemies," and marked "plausible" by

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*In 1853, Redfield of New York published a one-volume edition of Shakespeare, edited by G. S. Duyckinck, with all the Collier emendations incorporated in the text; adding the old readings at the foot of each page. Consulting this work we are brought, as it seems to me, nearer to Shakespeare himself than we are in any other edition of his plays. To have rendered the volume more complete, the "Sonnets" should have been arranged in the order indicated by Gerald Massey, with the interpretations of that acute writer appended to each. (See "Shakespeare's Sonnets, never before interpreted; his private friends identified." By Gerald Massey. London: Longmans, Green and Company. 1866.)

Mrs. Jameson. (I remember once suggesting "Erinnys" for this "run-away's," Erinnys to be taken to mean the civic discord reigning at the time in Verona.)

It is pleasant to observe that the orthography of Shakespeare's name employed by Mrs. Jameson is that employed by Shakespeare himself in the only two instances which we possess of his signature as printed and of course seen and revised by himself, thus having a literal *imprimatur* of his own authority. These instances of course are the "WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE," "WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE," appended by his own hand to the dedications of the "Venus and Adonis" and "Lucrece," respectively, to the Earl of Southampton. The few remaining authentic autographs of Shakespeare are all of them more or less difficult to decipher. After deciding on the full dignified form of his name which he elected to adopt when affixing his signature to the two dedications to the Earl of Southhampton he may have often from habit or through inadvertence signed his name in one or other of the old ways, which he had been wont to make use of previously. It can be shown that in the Elizabethan era persons of even good culture and high rank varied without scruple the form of their family names when producing them on paper. Thus Raleigh and Rawleigh and Rawley were interchangeable. In setting his name once for all as "William Shakespeare," the dramatist had doubtless in his mind the divers ways in which the name was pronounced and phonetically written among illiterate provincials at Stratford and in Warwickshire generally—all this he desired to put a stop to, in his own case at least; and his friends, Heminge and Condell, Ben Jonson, and most others, seem to have humoured him in this respect and always spelt the name as he himself had subscribed it when signing the dedications to the Earl of Southampton.

The tablet to the memory of his wife in the church at Stratford reads: "Here lyeth interred the body of Anne, wife of Mr. William Shakespeare, who departed this life the 6th day of August, 1623, being of the age of 67 years."

Some eight or ten varieties have been enumerated of the form of the word Shakespeare, all of them

representing the provincial pronunciation which seems to have made the first syllable of the word short—Shak, not Shake—hence even among the better educated from Shakespeare's time downwards the form Shakspeare has been considered by no means objectionable. On the tablet under the bust in Stratford Church it is thus written. Chaucer in his day, like the Anglo-Saxons before him, might write spere for speare, but in 1598 this orthography had become obsolete, and thus scarcely conveyed to the common mind an idea of the spear which figured in the Shakespeare shield of arms as " on a bend a speare the point upward," and again in the crest in which a spear appears in the claw of a falcon in an upright position, and quivering in motion as we may suppose with allusion to the word shake, formerly the first syllable in the family name. This abbreviation of the first syllable in form as well as in sound, in compound dissyllables is quite in accordance with the genius of the English language, as may be observed in such words as vinyard, shepherd, breakfast, wisdom, knowledge, nothing, etc.

An unfortunate adherence to the current orthography of the word spear led at a later time to a form of the poet's name, which to us now seems singularly ungraceful. Alexander Pope, in his elaborate edition of the poet's works, uses throughout the form Shakespear. This would be in the reign of Anne or George the First. The form of the name employed by a very distinguished modern oriental scholar was the same, as I gather from the title-page of a work of his now before me :—" Muntakhabat-I-Hindi ; or Selections in Hindustani with Verbal Translations or Particular Vocabularies and a Grammatical Analysis of some parts, for the use of Students of that Language. By John Shakespear." Printed in London in 1852, and dedicated to the Chairman and Directors of the East India Company. This learned man was a Professor in Addiscombe College. He generously presented the sum of £2,500 in furtherance of the scheme for preserving, as national property, the house and surrounding premises of the great dramatist at Stratford-on-Avon. Another distinguished person of the same name was Sir Richmond Shakespear, a gallant general of

artillery, who did good service in India, and died in 1861.

We have in the Dominion of Canada a family bearing the great dramatist's name. The present postmaster of the city of Victoria, in British Columbia, is a Shakespeare, writing his name in the full dignified form now almost everywhere adopted among English literary men. His baptismal name is Noah.

The relic of Mrs. Jameson, which has given rise to the composition of this paper, I value all the more from the fact that a good many years ago I was so fortunate as to become personally acquainted with that writer under very pleasant circumstances. She was for several days an honoured guest in a house where I was myself at the time domiciled. I was thus brought under the spell, as it were, of that influence which she everywhere so remarkably exercised, and had many opportunities of enjoying her conversation, which richly teemed with anecdotes and incidents connected with numberless distinguished persons of modern and earlier times; all most aptly and tastefully reproduced. This was at Sorel, some miles below Montreal, at the official summer residence of the Commander-in-Chief of the forces, then Sir John Colborne, of two of whose sons I was in charge as private tutor, Mrs. Jameson being on her way to New York through Montreal, after her memorable excursion to Lake Huron and the Sault, so well described in her "Summer Rambles in Canada." Sir John Colborne had invited her to pay a visit to him at Sorel. I thus, of course, on several occasions had pleasant little interchanges of thought with her, finding her always very frank and ready, most usefully and with great tact to indicate the crudities and inaccuracies which she might detect in any speaker. She exhibited a kindly inclination to make a special favourite of one of Sir John's daughters on account of her Shakespearian name —"Cordelia." Mrs. Jameson had with her numerous beautiful water-colour sketches taken during her late tour, together with many etchings by her own hand; for one of which, representing a child sleeping in the open air under the shadow of a tree in a wood, I remember I furnished a scrap from Horace to be appended to it as a kind of motto, which much pleased her, viz.: *non sine dîs animosus infans;*

as did also a certain trifling extract from Henry Cornelius Agrippa's "Vanity of the Sciences," proving that in his time (1486–1535) the charivari customs, common among the *habitans* of Lower Canada, were well known in Germany. *

Mrs. Jameson was a perfect proficient in music, vocal and intrumental, with a voice gentle and soft, accompanying herself in a very quiet and simple manner. The hands of Mrs. Jameson were remarkably beautiful. How their extreme whiteness and delicacy were preserved during the unavoidable inconveniences and exposures of the recent extensive canoe trip was a mystery, but I think in relation to some allusion to this escape I overheard a strong hint given to one of her young lady friends, that never under any circumstances must the hands be ungloved for one moment in the out-of-door air, or sun light, a precept enforced by a reiterated emphatic *never*. I also gathered that a Bible and a Shakespeare were almost the sole literary companions of her voyage, and that a small stiletto or poignard was secretly carried for self-defence if there should be any need. And once I recollect in allusion to her safety in the journey just accomplished she good-humouredly repeated some lines from a familiar song of Dibdin's: "They say there's a Providence sits up aloft, to keep watch for the life of poor Jack." In addition to the annotated volume I have an autograph letter of Mrs. Jameson addressed in playful strain to Mr. Jameson before her marriage; likewise some letters written by her to Mrs. McMurray at the Sault, wife of the Rev. Dr. McMurray. Mrs. McMurray was a woman after Mrs. Jameson's own heart, highly gifted and possessed of all noble womanly and motherly qualities, of a stately form and fine presence generally; moreover what would be a circumstance of the most intense interest to Mrs. Jameson herself, as would be visible at the first glance to a stranger, in her veins flowed the blood of the aboriginal people of the country. On her mother's side, of chieftain's rank she had been highly educated and spoke with

* A sketch-book of Mrs. Jameson's, containing many views taken during her visit to Canada, is in the possession of Mr. Bain, principal librarian of the Toronto Public Library.

great refinement the Otchipway language. Dr. McMurray was the first Anglican missionary at the Sault, and curiously enough was the first person at that place to be entrusted with a commission of the peace by a *Dedimus Potestatem* from the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province.

The works of Mrs. Jameson which I have contrived to place upon my shelves are the following: "Sacred and Legendary Art," 2 vols.; "The Monastic Orders in Art," 2 vols.; "The History of Our Lord as exemplified in Art," 2 vols. (the completion by Lady Eastlake), all copiously illustrated; "Memoirs and Essays"; "Memoirs of Female Sovereigns," 2 vols.; "Visits and Sketches including the Diary of an Ennuyée"; "Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada," 3 vols.; "Thoughts, Memoirs and Fancies"; "Social Life in Germany," and the "Characteristics of Women"; the edition which I have of the last-mentioned work is the one published in New York, of which the peculiarity is that its preface is dated from Toronto, and several etchings on copper-plate are inserted in it, executed by the hand of Mrs. Jameson herself, not in the London edition.

As an introduction to "The Characteristics of Women" there is to be seen an imaginary conversation between Alda, evidently the authoress, and a friend Medon. The nice and clever way in which the talk passes across and back between the speakers in the dialogue is a good specimen of the style of conversation which was sure to arise between the gifted Mrs. Jameson and a party of intelligent friends. Alda and Medon figure likewise in similar conversations, prefixed to "Visits and Sketches" and "Social Life in Germany." All Mrs. Jameson's books show a noble ambition to elevate the female character, and to suggest worthy employments for female gifts. To her is in a great measure due the institution of the Sisterhoods of Charity, in modern times so useful in our hospitals.

I have added to my collection the "Memoirs" of Mrs. Jameson, by her niece, Geraldine Macpherson, published in 1878. The frontispiece to this work consists of a miniature portrait, showing Mrs. Jameson as quite young. She is represented pointing upwards with her left hand, as

if listening. Another portrait taken in middle life of a much larger size in general circulation gives the figure in much the same attitude, which somewhat resembles that of Mrs. Siddons in the well-known representation of her as the "Muse of Tragedy." A third portrait appears in later volumes showing Mrs. Jameson in her old age, a very pleasing and natural picture. The head is partially covered with a black kerchief, which falls negligently from the back of the head. In the South Kensington Museum there was to be seen in the year 1867 a grand marble bust of Mrs. Jameson, executed by the celebrated sculptor, John Gibson. Mrs. Jameson, it should be added, departed this life in 1860.

In later years I formed the acquaintance of the husband of Mrs. Jameson at Toronto. He was a man highly educated and possessing great taste, and even skill, in respect of art. He was a connoisseur and collector of fine editions. His conversation was charged with reminiscences and anecdotes of the celebrated occupants of the lake district of Westmoreland, the Coleridges, Wordsworths and Southey, with all of whom he had been intimate in his youth. The "Sonnets" in Hartley Coleridge's little volume, addressed "To a Friend," were, in fact, addressed to Mr. Jameson. Before his appointment in Canada he had been a judge in one of the West India Islands. Here he was appointed the Chief of the First Equity Court of the Province, under the title of Vice-Chancellor, the theory being that the Governor was the Chancellor. In Toronto Mr. Jameson inhabited a villa situated in what are now the grounds of the Loretto Convent on Front Street.